

## REVIEWS

**The Ferns and Allied Plants of New England**, by Alice F. Tryon and Robbin C. Moran. 1997. Center for Biological Conservation, Massachusetts Audubon Society, 208 South Great Road, Lincoln, MA 01773. xv, 325 pp. Hardcover (ISBN 0-932691-23-4) \$49.95 plus \$3.00 shipping/handling.

This marvelous book, the second in the Massachusetts Audubon's Natural History of New England series, is a most useful guide to identification of the nearly 100 ferns and fern allies of New England's six states: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. It was carefully prepared and tightly edited. The reader is first provided a phylogenetic list of families, genera, and species and a key to genera. Then the body of the book is organized into generic treatments, with the ferns first and then the fern allies, arranged phylogenetically. For each genus there is a generic description and key to species, with black frond silhouettes that explain or confirm the language of the key. Species descriptions include scientific binomials, synonymy, common name, morphological characteristics, habitat, New England range, world range, chromosome number, remarks regarding habitats, habit, hybrids, floristics, economic use, and derivation of scientific name. Locality dot maps are provided for New England collections; tone maps for world range. The black and white photographs by W. H. Hodge and Robert L. Coffin are coffee-table art-book quality. A most distinctive feature of this work is that the text is supplemented with 142 scanning electron photomicrographs of spores showing clearly their shapes and surface features. These show how ferns of remarkably similar frond morphology may have remarkably different spores, making identifications by spores often easier than by fronds alone. A brief section on New England climate and geology is an aid for interpretive naturalists. The section on good choices for the garden presents ferns by size categories. References are listed for further study of horticultural uses of ferns. Access to any part of the book is made easy with a glossary, reference list of technical literature, and index to scientific and common names. Synonymy is sufficient to relate the taxonomy employed here to other floristic works.

The authors are to be congratulated for summarizing New England pteridophyte floristics with an economy of words, wonderful photos, maps, and silhouettes, and very usable keys. The care and attention they took in the preparation and editing of the book contributed to the simple elegance of the final product. All this and six state fern floras, all for about \$8.00 a State!—  
JAMES H. PECK, Department of Biology, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2801 S. University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204.